

Court Information Release



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Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division
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District Court Honors Graduates of the Judge Rubén Castillo Sentencing Options that Achieve Results (SOAR) Program

Collaborative initiative of U.S. District Court, U.S. Pretrial Services, Federal Defender Program and U.S. Attorney's Office graduates 7 federal pretrial defendants

Chicago, Ill. – Today the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois honored a new class of graduates of the Judge Rubén Castillo Sentencing Options that Achieve Results (SOAR) Program.

“In a time when we are all facing difficult challenges, participants in the SOAR program have continued to work hard toward their goals of living productive, law-abiding lives. Today I congratulate our graduates on their accomplishments and look forward with them to a bright and happy future. I am proud of our SOAR program, and hope it will continue to provide a compassionate alternative to incarceration,” said Chief Judge Rebecca R. Pallmeyer, U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois.

“The SOAR Program Team is so proud of this class of SOAR participants. Through their grit and despite pandemic-related challenges, they have made remarkable strides toward becoming healthy, law-abiding, and productive members of our community,” said Circuit Judge Amy J. St. Eve, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit.

In today’s virtual ceremony, Circuit Judge Amy J. St. Eve and District Judge Mary M. Rowland spoke about each of the graduates. The Chicago Urban Historian, Shermann 'Dilla' Thomas, delivered a keynote address to the graduates.

Through treatment, sanction alternatives, and incentives to reinforce positive behavior, the SOAR program provides an alternative to incarceration for federal pretrial defendants.

Participants in the SOAR program meet in bi-monthly court sessions with members of the SOAR Team to discuss each participant's progress in his or her efforts to succeed: sobriety, constructive employment, education, crime-free and productive lifestyle. SOAR provides a higher level of supervision, programming, and judicial oversight for participants through a collaborative team approach, which involves judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, pretrial services officers and treatment providers. Participation in the SOAR program lasts from eighteen to twenty-four months. Successful completion of the program results in the imposition of a non-custodial sentence. The U.S. Attorney's Office may also reduce the felony to a misdemeanor conviction or possibly dismiss the criminal charges.

Established in October 2016, SOAR was created through the collaborative partnership of the United States District Court, the United States Pretrial Services Office, the Federal Defender Program, and the United States Attorney's Office. Members of the SOAR team include U.S. Circuit Judge Amy J. St. Eve; U.S. District Judge Mary M. Rowland; U.S. Magistrate Judge Beth W. Jantz; Amanda Garcia, Chief U.S. Pretrial Services; Patrick J. May, U.S. Pretrial Services Officer; Carla Tramonte, Pretrial Services Officer; Meghan Morrissey, Executive Assistant United States Attorney; Charles "Chip" Mulaney, Assistant United States Attorney; Christina Farley Jackson, Deputy Director, Federal Defender Program; and Geoffrey Meyer, Staff Attorney, Federal Defender Program.

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